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Message Text

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SUBJECT: PRESS MATERIAL

1. HEREWITH FULL TEXT HENRY TANNER FRONT PAGE BYLINER NEW YORK TIMES WEDNESDAY DECEMBER 8 HEADED "P.L.O. SAID TO WEIGH JOINING OTHER ARABS IN PEACE DELEGATION/PALESTINIAN MOVEMENT MAY DROP INSISTENCE ON A SEPARATE ROLE AT CONFERENCE IN GENEVA."

2. BEIRUT, LEBANON, DECEMBER 7--PALESTINIAN LEADERS ARE MOVING TOWARD ACCEPTANCE OF AN EGYPTIAN PROPOSAL FOR THEIR INCLUSION IN A SINGLE ARAB DELEGATION TO A RECONVENED GENEVA CONFERENCE ON THE MIDDLE EAST, INFORMED ARAB DIPLOMATS SAID TODAY.

3. UNTIL NOW, THE PALESTINIANS HAVE BEEN INSISTING THAT THE PALESTINE LIBERATION ORGANIZATION TAKE PART IN THE CONFERENCE AS AN INDEPENDENT DELEGATION ALONG WITH DELEGATIONS OF EGYPT, SYRIA, JORDAN AND ISRAEL.

4. THIS STAND HAS BEEN VETOED BY ISRAEL, WHICH IS SUPPORTED
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IN ITS STAND BY THE UNITED STATES. THE TWO GOVERNMENTS

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SAY THAT THE P.L.O. MUST RECOGNIZE ISRAEL'S RIGHT TO EXIST BEFORE IT CAN QUALIFY FOR PARTICIPATION AT A PEACE CONFERENCE.

5. AT THE UNITED NATIONS YESTERDAY, ISRAEL CALLED FOR RESUMPTION OF THE GENEVA CONFERENCE WITHOUT THE P.L.O.. IN A STATEMENT LATER, CHAIM HERZOG, THE ISRAELI REPRESENTATIVE, SAID THAT THE ISRAELI DELEGATION AT GENEVA WOULD NOT CHECK THE CREDENTIALS OF THE MEMBERS OF THE JORDANIAN, EGYPTIAN AND SYRIAN DELEGATIONS.

6. ISRAEL FAVORS P.L.O. ABSENCE--THE PALESTINIAN MOVEMENT HAS REFUSED TO BECOME A MEMBER OF A JORDANIAN OR A JOINT JORDANIAN-SYRIAN DELEGATION. THIS REFUSAL IS BEING MAINTAINED, ACCORDING TO INFORMED DIPLOMATS.

7. AS FOR JORDAN, OFFICIALS IN AMMAN NOW TAKE THE POSITION THAT THEIR DELEGATION WILL DISCUSS ONLY ISSUES THAT CONCERN JORDAN AND WILL NOT ATTEMPT TO NEGOTIATE FOR THE PALESTINIANS. THE JORDANIANS ADD THAT ANY DEAL MADE BY A JORDANIAN DELEGATION WOULD BE REJECTED BY THE PALESTINIANS AND OTHER ARABS REGARDLESS OF ITS MERIT.

8. SYRIA, AT THE OUTSET, WAS COOL TO THE EGYPTIAN PROPOSAL FOR A SINGLE ARAB DELEGATION. HAVING USED THEIR POWER IN LEBANON, THE SYRIANS CLAIMED A LEADERSHIP ROLE IN THE ARAB WORLD. IN A JOINT DELEGATION, BY CONTRAST, EGYPT IS LIKELY TO BE THE LEADING MEMBER.

9. PRESIDENT HAFEZ AL-ASSAD WILL GO TO CAIRO AT THE END OF THIS WEEK FOR TALKS WITH PRESIDENT ANWAR EL-SADAT. THE TWO LEADERS ARE UNDER PRESSURE FROM SAUDI ARABIA TO AGREE TO A JOINT STRATEGY.

10. ARAB DIPLOMATS HERE TOOK MR. HERZOG'S STATEMENT IN NEW YORK AS A SIGN THAT ISRAEL DID NOT REJECT THE EGYPTIAN PROPOSAL FOR A SINGLE ARAB DELEGATION WITH PALESTINIAN PARTICIPATION.

11. PRESIDENT SADAT AND HIS AIDES HAVE BEEN PROMOTING
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THIS PROPOSAL FOR SOME TIME.

12. EVEN IF THEY JOINED A SINGLE DELEGATION, HOWEVER, PALESTINIAN LEADERS WOULD STILL DEMAND THAT THEY RECEIVE A FORMAL INVITATION FROM THE UNITED STATES AND THE SOVIET UNION, CO-CHAIRMEN OF THE GENEVA CONFERENCE, THE ARAB DIPLOMATS SAID.

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13. RESOLUTION 242 AT ISSUE--BOTH THE BIG POWERS HAVE BEEN SAYING THAT SUCH AN INVITATION WOULD BE ISSUED ONLY IF THE PALESTINIAN LEADERSHIP ACCEPTED SECURITY COUNCIL

RESOLUTION 242, WHICH WAS ADOPTED AFTER THE WAR OF JUNE 1967 AND GIVES EVERY STATE IN THE MIDDLE EAST THE RIGHT TO EXIST WITHIN SECURE BORDERS.

14. THE P.L.O. HAS REJECTED THIS RESOLUTION MANY TIMES, MOST RECENTLY IN A TOUGH STATEMENT ISSUED BY THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE 10 DAYS AGO.

15. NEVERTHELESS, A SOFTENING OF THE P.L.O. ATTITUDE ON THIS MATTER CAN BE DISCERNED.

16. THE TOUGH STATEMENT, WHICH WAS ALSO BITTERLY CRITICAL OF SYRIA, WAS MADE IN THE ABSENCE OF YASIR ARAFAT, THE P.L.O. LEADER, AND OF NAYEF HAWATMEH, THE HEAD OF THE MARXIST-ORIENTED DEMOCRATIC FRONT, WHICH IS A CLOSE ALLY OF AL FATAH, THE LARGEST OF THE VARIOUS GUERRILLA FACTIONS.

17. BOTH MEN WERE DESCRIBED AS UNHAPPY WITH THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE STATEMENT. WAFA, THE OFFICIAL PALESTINIAN PRESS SERVICE, THEN FOLLOWED UP WITH A SERIES OF STRIKINGLY CONCILIATORY DECLARATIONS.

18. A HIGH-RANKING PALESTINIAN OFFICIAL TOLD A REPORTER IN PRIVATE THAT RESOLUTION 242 WAS "NO LONGER AN ISSUE" AND SHOULD NOT HAVE FIGURED IN THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE STATEMENT.

19. THE PALESTINIANS, ARAB DIPLOMATS HERE FEEL, ARE UNCLASSIFIED

LIKELY TO FOLLOW THE SYRIAN EXAMPLE IN DEALING WITH RESOLUTION 242.

20. SYRIA, UNLIKE EGYPT, REJECTED THIS RESOLUTION FOR YEARS. THEN, AFTER THE WAR IN OCTOBER 1973, THE SYRIAN LEADERSHIP ENDORSED THE SECURITY COUNCIL'S RESOLUTION 338 WHICH PUT AN END TO THE FIGHTING WHILE AT THE SAME TIME STATING THAT RESOLUTION 242 REMAINED VALID.

21. MR. ARAFAT, WHO WAS IN RUMANIA TODAY, IS DUE IN MOSCOW TOMORROW FOR TALKS WITH SOVIET OFFICIALS ABOUT THE GENEVA CONFERENCE, RESOLUTION 242 AND PROPOSALS FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A PALESTINIAN STATE ON THE WEST BANK OF THE JORDAN AND IN THE GAZA STRIP.

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22. THE RUSSIANS WANT TO SEE THE GENEVA CONFERENCE RECONVENED AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. (END TEXT.) ROBINSON

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